

RECREATION FEE ACCOUNT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Colorado River (Moab)

Description

The Moab Field Office manages private and commercial river recreation on the Colorado River. The Colorado “Daily” is Utah’s most popular whitewater river recreation area, with approximately 77,155 visitors in 2011. The area is served by 22 commercial outfitters; thousands of private boaters also float it every year. BLM maintains seven boat ramps along the river with toilet facilities, parking and other infrastructure. Many of the boat ramps also have associated camping facilities. Park rangers based in Moab patrol the Daily section and provide visitor services.

The internationally known, technically challenging, Westwater Canyon section of the Colorado River is a BLM Special Area, where both commercial and private use are fully allocated through a launch system. This launch system is administered through an advance reservation program operated by the Moab Field Office. About 15,000 people floated Westwater with 18 commercial outfitters or on private trips in 2009. The Westwater Ranger Station serves as the put in for the Westwater trip, as well as the takeout for a Colorado float trip through the McInnis Canyon NCA. Camping facilities are also provided at Westwater Ranger Station. Additionally, a ramp for the take out from the Westwater float trip is provided at Cisco. The BLM houses three river rangers at the Westwater Ranger Station, providing 24 hour a day coverage supporting river management operations during the nine month season.

Operation of the Colorado River program could not be accomplished without funding from the UT02 fee account. The account pays all river ranger salaries, all reservation and permit office expenses, including salary, all vehicle costs, all equipment and supply costs, and all patrol costs.

Fee Schedule

Outfitters pay the 3% commercial use fee for all Colorado River trips (as set by BLM fee policy). In addition, all private boaters and commercial passengers pay a \$10.00 per person per trip Special Area fee for Westwater Canyon. There is no charge for private use of the “Daily”.

Accomplishments

UT02 funds paid for the maintenance and operation of the Westwater ranger station in full. The station is staffed by three river rangers, who are paid out of UT02 funds. These rangers do regular routine safety patrols in Westwater Canyon. The station complex includes a public drinking water system, staff housing, a boat ramp, toilets and a campground; all are maintained by UT02 funds. The ranger station is remote, and is furnished with radios, cell phones and a satellite phone for safety purposes. UT02 funds pay for the yearly mucking out of all nine boat ramps, which is a continual and recurring expense after the river recedes in the spring. These funds also pay for such supplies as toilet paper and trash bags.

Visitor Services, Interpretation

UT02 funds support the on-going volunteer program at Westwater (WAVE: Westwater Association Volunteers for Excellence). These volunteers provide additional safety patrols in the canyon, as well as assist with safety check-ins at Westwater. Subsistence and volunteer uniforms components are provided through UT02 funds.

Repair, Maintenance, and Facility Enhancement

The 2011 fiscal year saw the doubling of capacity at the primary “Daily” take out ramp. The ramp was widened to six concrete lanes. River informational kiosks were painted and signs refurbished. A new high pressure water cleaning unit was purchased to better clean the toilets. UT02 funds bought Law Enforcement gear and safety dry suits for river rangers. New toilets were purchased for the Westwater Ranger Station, and new toilet doors were purchased for other boat ramp locations.

Law Enforcement – Public Use and Recreation

Law Enforcement services are provided at Westwater and along the Daily using UT 02 funds.

Wildlife Habitat Restoration, Resource Protection

River rangers regularly patrol Westwater Canyons for invasive weeds; by removing these weeds, resources are protected and habitat improved.

Fee Agreements and Reservation Services

UT02 funds support the launch system operation in Moab, which allocates river use throughout the year.

Contact Information: Bureau of Land Management, Moab Field Office

Telephone: 435-259-2100

Email: blm_ut_mb_mail@blm.gov